

STARBLAZER

SPACE FICTION ADVENTURE IN PICTURES No. 61

16p



ESCAPE FROM DEVIL'S MOON


STARBLAZER



TERRAN
FEDERATION
STRETCHED OUT INTO THE
UNEXPLORED DEPTHS OF SPACE
TO FIND SPECIAL PLANETS —
PLANETS WITH A DOUBLE PURPOSE.
THEY HAD TO CONTAIN THE ORES
NEEDED TO MANUFACTURE THE MANY
FUEL PELLETS USED TO POWER SPACE
VESSELS. THEY HAD ALSO TO BE HOME
FOR THOUSANDS OF LONG TERM
CONVICTS WHO SERVED THEIR
SENTENCES ON THESE SPACIAL
ISLANDS.

ESCAPE FROM DEVIL'S MOON

ONE SUCH WORLD WAS CATRAZ, KNOWN AS DEVIL'S MOON.



THIS IS CONVICT FERRYSHIP,
BETA 7, FROM PROCYON
REQUESTING APPROACH
CLEARANCE.

PERMISSION GRANTED, RYN TOR. SO THAT
OLD SPACE BUCKET HAS MANAGED TO GET
HERE YET AGAIN.



SOME HOLIDAY CAMP, TOR. NO ONE COMES HERE OUT OF CHOICE. ESPECIALLY WHEN YOU'VE A RADIOACTIVE WASTE DUMP FOR A NEIGHBOUR.



AS TOR EASED THE SHIP TOWARDS THE LANDING PADS —

I'VE A ROW OF RED ALERT LIGHTS,
CONTROL. IT'S THOSE GYROS AGAIN! I'M
ABORTING THE LANDING.



IT'S A MAJOR SYSTEMS
FAILURE. THE OLD GIRL IS
PACKING UP ON ME.

TOR FOUGHT TO KEEP THE SHIP UNDER CONTROL, BUT STRUCK THE CONTROL TOWER.

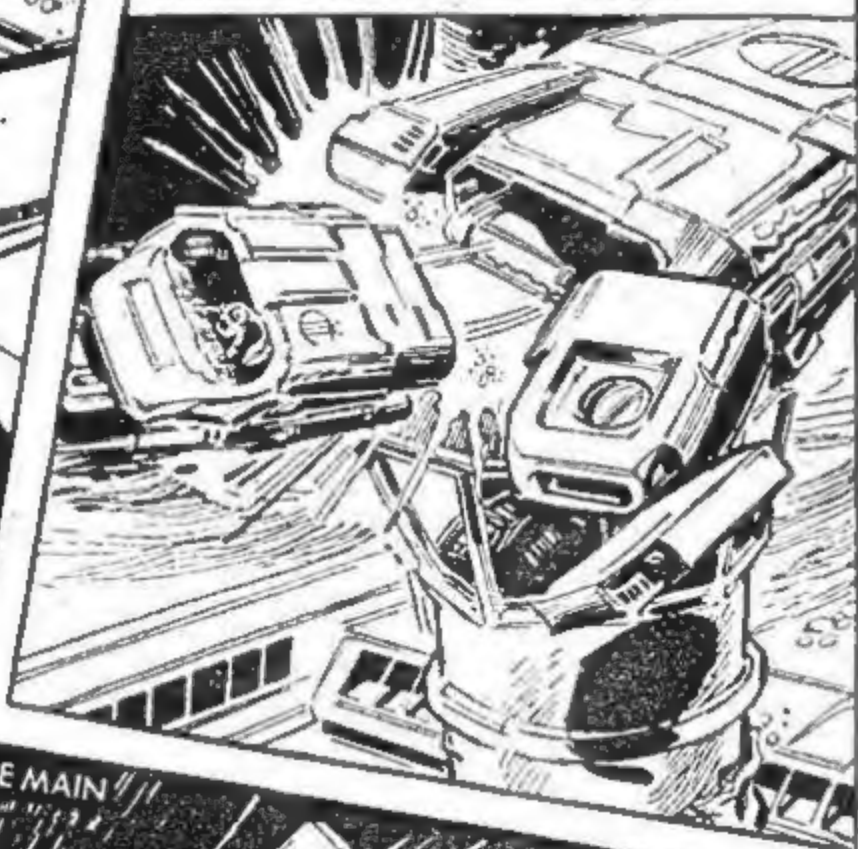
BY THE MOONS OF ...
SHE'S BREAKING UP!



TOR'S FINGER STABBED THE EJECTOR BUTTON.



SECONDS LATER DEATH RAINED DOWN
UPON THE PENAL COLONY AS TOR GOT
SAFELY AWAY IN THE ESCAPE POD.



THE ENGINE SECTION PLUNGED PAST THE MAIN
BASE, AND INTO THE NUCLEAR SILOS.





TOR LANDED AND MADE FOR
THE NEAREST DOME.

THERE'S JUST A CHANCE SOMEONE MAY
STILL BE ALIVE DOWN BELOW. BUT ONCE
THOSE ATOMIC VOLCANOES BLOW...



TOR PENETRATED THE LOWER LEVELS AS FAR AS HE DARED.

POOR DEVILS. THOSE WHO SURVIVED
THE IMPACT WERE SOON KILLED BY
METHANE. TREMORS! I'M RUNNING
OUT OF TIME!

MAXIMUM
SECURITY



BUT AS HE MOVED TO RETURN TO HIS CRAFT—

IF THERE'S SOMEONE THERE—HELP
US. THE DOOR CAN ONLY BE
OPENED FROM THAT SIDE.

SURVIVORS!



WARNING THE MEN TO HOLD THEIR BREATH TOR OPERATED THE LOCK ON THE MASSIVE DOOR.

TAKE THESE MASKS—AND RUN



THE GROUND TEMBLED VIOLENTLY AS THEY HEADED FOR THE SURFACE.

A BOILING, RADIOACTIVE BALL RUSHED ACROSS THE GROUND TOWARDS THEM.

THESE MEN ARE THE DREGS OF THE GALAXY, BUT THEY ARE STILL HUMAN BEINGS. GOOD GRIEF—WHAT'S THAT?



THIS WHOLE AREA WILL BE ENGULFED IN MINUTES—AND THAT INCLUDES US!



TOR AND THE CRIMINALS REACHED THE ESCAPE CRAFT.

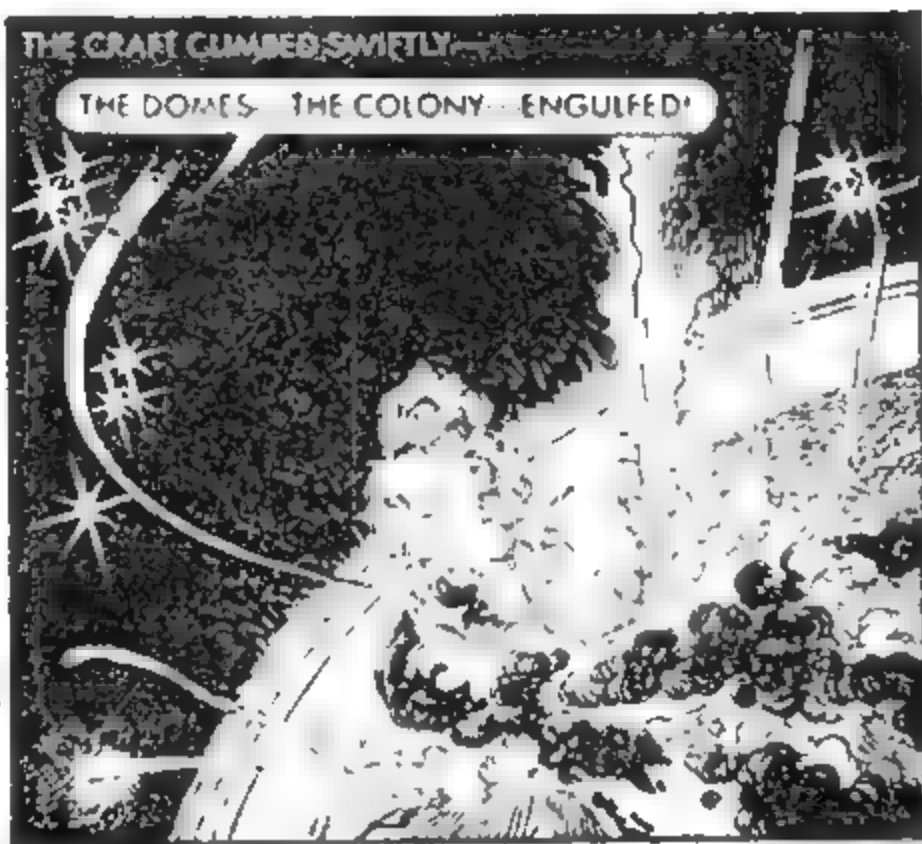


THAT WAS
TOO CLOSE!



THE CRAFT CLIMBED SWIFTLY—

THE DOME— THE COLONY— ENGULFED!







MILLISECONDS LATER THE PRIMARY BOOSTERS THRUST THE CRAFT TO 0.9 OF LIGHT SPEED



I'M GONNA ... CRUSH ... YOU ... SPACER

WE'RE AT MAXIMUM BOOST AND YET HE'S STILL STANDING. THERE'S ONLY ONE THING LEFT—SUSPENDED ANIMATION GAS!

SEALING HIS HELMET, TOR PRESSED
THE CRYOGENIC GAS RELEASE
BUTTON

YOU... C...CANT...

CLICK!
SLEEP WELL! SOON YOU'LL BE TRUSSED UP
AND PROCYON BOUND

THE GIANT CRIMINAL MANAGED TO PUSH TOR FROM HIS SEAT

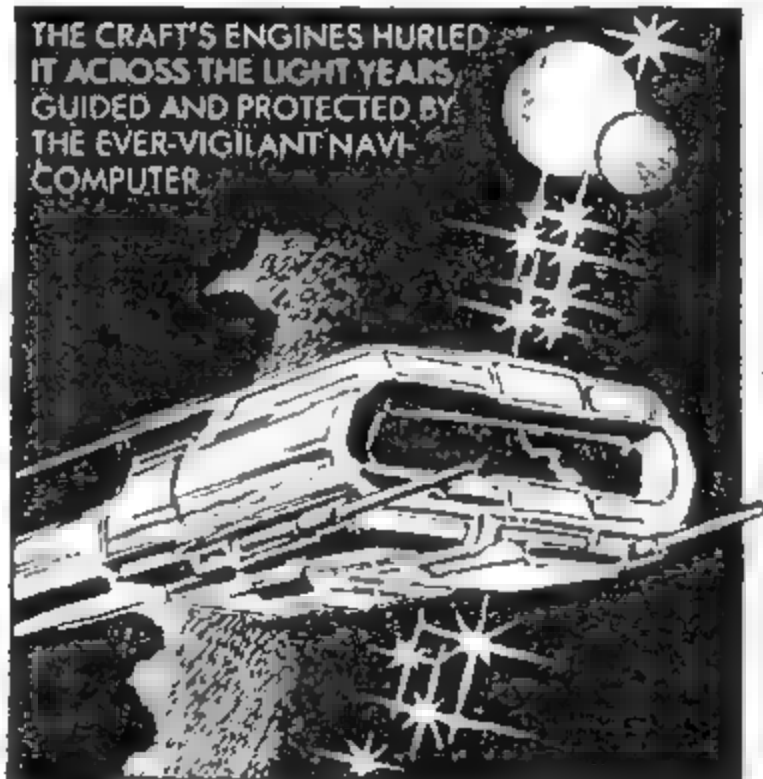
MY HELMET



AT LIGHT SPEED THE CRAFT
WITH ITS SLUMBERING
PASSENGERS SPED AWAY
FROM THE WIDENING
SPHERE OF DEBRIS THAT
WAS ONCE CATRAZ



THE CRAFT'S ENGINES HURLED
IT ACROSS THE LIGHT YEARS,
GUIDED AND PROTECTED BY
THE EVER-VIGILANT NAVI-
COMPUTER.




UNTIL, IN A SYSTEM ON THE RIM OF THE GALAXY MANY UNITS LATER—



TOR WAS THE FIRST TO COME ROUND.




WE'VE BEEN IN SUSPENDED ANIMATION FOR MONTHS. MUST HAVE BLASTED CLEAR ACROSS THE GALAXY. THE 'PUTER ONLY OVER RODE THE CRYOGENIC CIRCUITS BECAUSE IT NEEDED INSTRUCTIONS.



WE'RE HOMING IN ON A BEACON. WE'RE LOW ON POWER BUT WE CAN MAKE IT NOW TO SORT OUT ANOTHER PROBLEM.

MY HEAD... WHERE AM I?



WE'RE LIGHT YEARS AWAY FROM KNOWN SPACE. WE'LL CLEAR OF THE SPACE LANES YOU GOT YOUR WAY AFTER ALL, KALIK

SO IT SEEMS, SPACER THERE IS NO QUARREL BETWEEN US NOW. I RECKON I CAN LET YOU LIVE

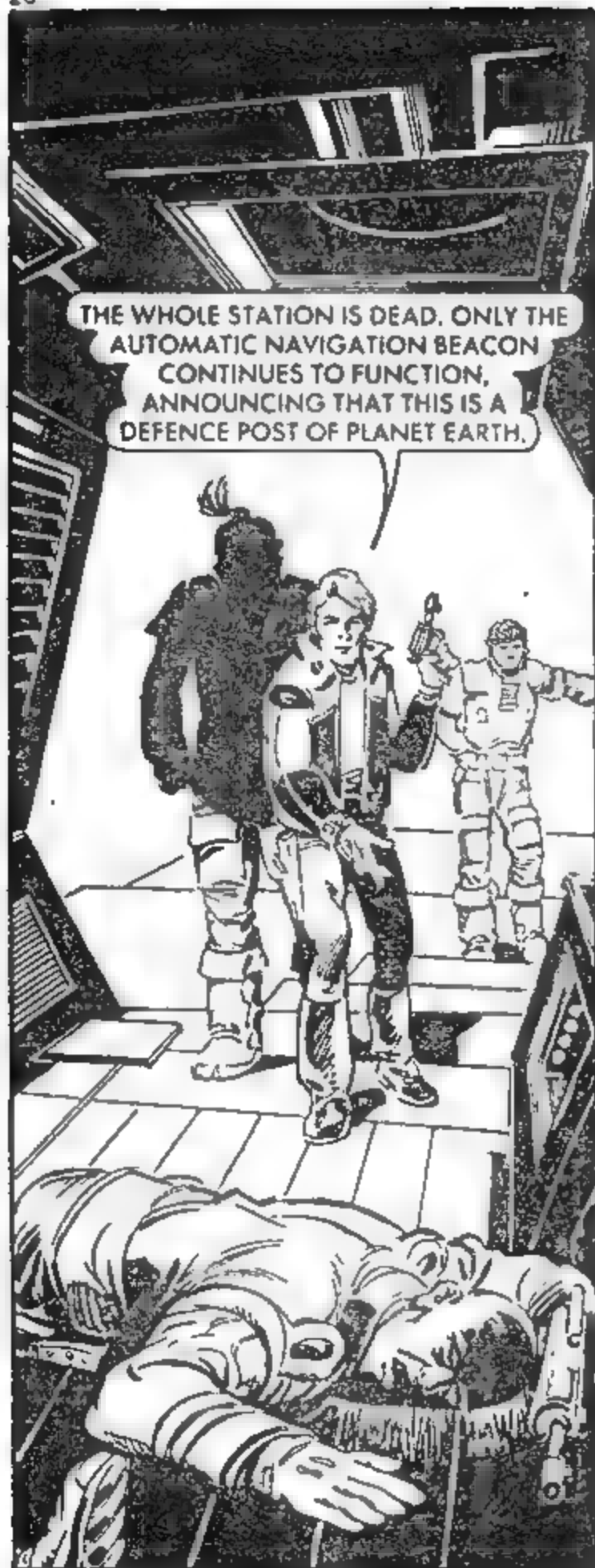
THEY APPROACHED THE SOURCE OF THE SIGNAL.

A WAY STATION I'M TRYING TO
RAISE THEM BUT ALL I GET IS STATIC.

IT DOESN'T
LOOK RIGHT, TOR

TOR DOCKED HIS CRAFT.

THIS IS A DEFENCE POST ... WE SHOULD
HAVE BEEN CHALLENGED



THEY EXPLORED THE LIFELESS HULK—

THIS WAS NO ACCIDENT. THOSE MEN HAVE LASER BURNS. THE STATION WAS ATTACKED. BUT BY WHOM?



THEY LOCATED THE SHUTTLE BAY, AND FOUND A VEHICLE STILL OPERATIONAL

PERHAPS THE ANSWERS ARE DOWN THERE, TOR, ON PLANET EARTH

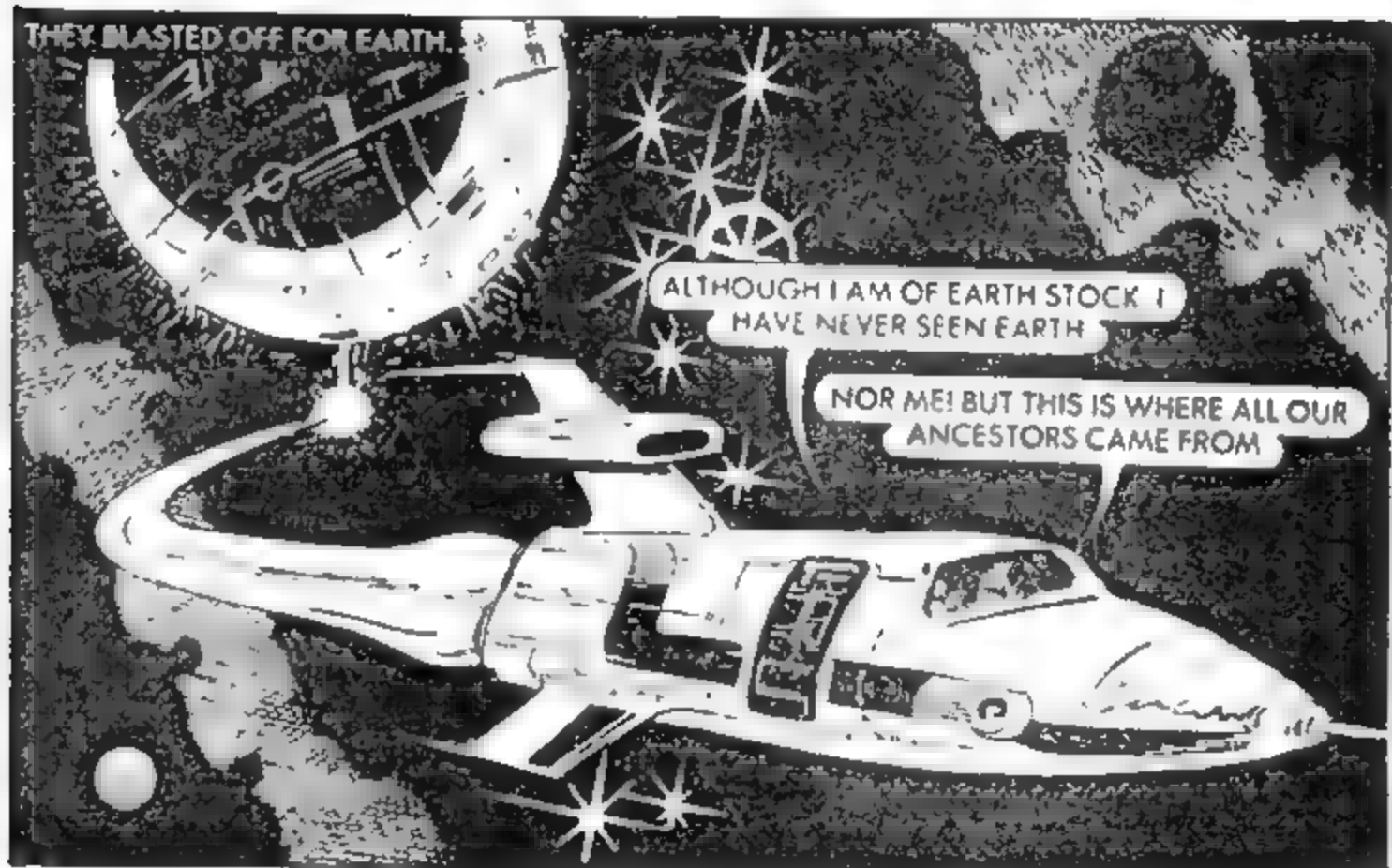
OUR PATH LIES TO THAT PLANET WHETHER WE LIKE IT OR NOT, KALIK THE LIFEBOAT IS INCAPABLE OF GOING ANY FURTHER. WE'RE STRANDED HERE IN THIS SYSTEM.




THEY BLASTED OFF FOR EARTH.

ALTHOUGH I AM OF EARTH STOCK I HAVE NEVER SEEN EARTH

NOR ME! BUT THIS IS WHERE ALL OUR ANCESTORS CAME FROM






I'VE TRIED EVERY POSSIBLE
FREQUENCY --THE AIRWAVES
ARE DEAD! THERE SHOULD BE
SOMETHING



WHAT THE ... ?

A DESPERATE ATTEMPT WAS MADE TO PUT OUT THE FIRE -



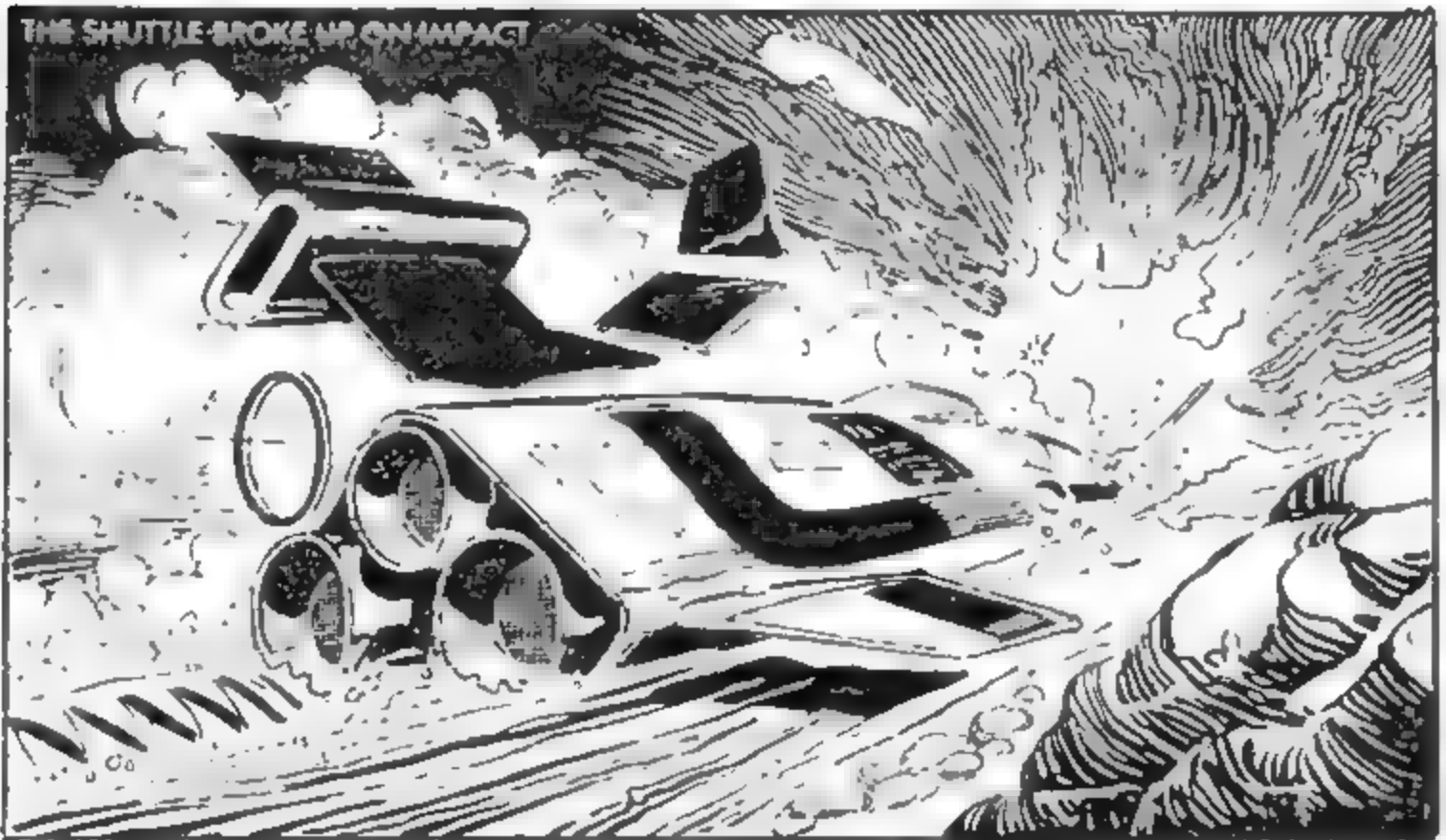
THAT WAS A PULSE BEAM THAT HIT
US! THEY'RE DESIGNED TO BRING
DOWN LOW FLYING CRAFT

THE CRIPPLED SHUTTLE SWEEP LOW OVER A DERELICT CITY.

GET YOUR NOSE UP
BABY. GET IT UP!

LOOK TOR. A CITY!
BUT IT'S COMPLETELY DERELICT





THE CRAFT CAME TO A GRINDING HALT

BY SOME MIRACLE WE'RE
DOWN IN ONE PIECE

QUICK GET CLEAR.
SHE'S GOING TO BLOW

EMERGENCY
SUPPLIES

THE SHUTTLE ERUPTED IN A BALL OF WHITE FLAME.

EMERGENCY
SUPPLIES



SOON THEY WERE AT THE FOOT OF THE MYSTERIOUS STRUCTURE

THERE'S NO SIGN OF AN ENTRANCE
WHAT IN THE COSMOS IS IT?

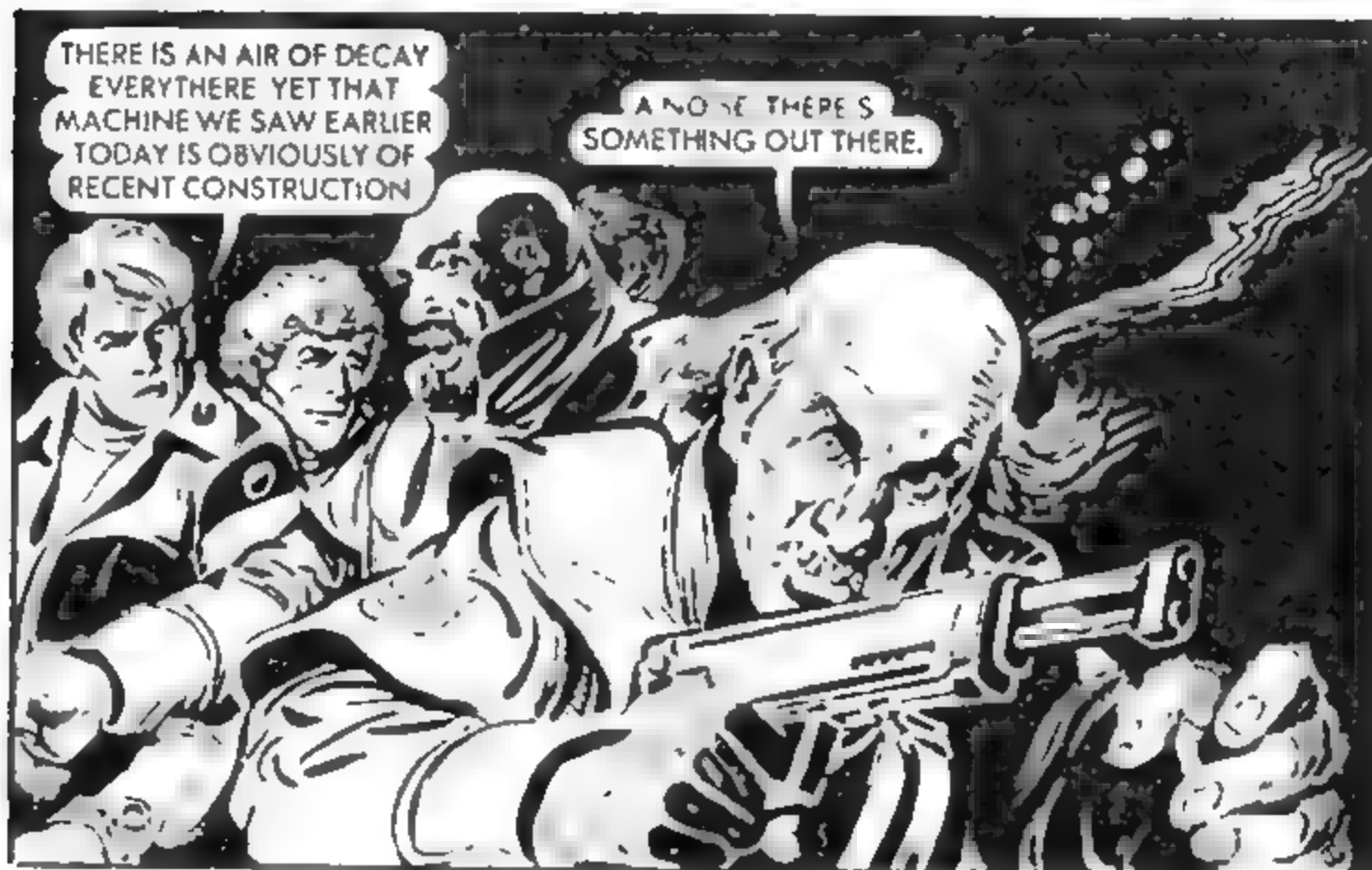


IT'S OUT OF PLACE HERE, TOR LOOK AT THE
WAY IT CREATES SUCH TURBULENCE IN THE
AIR ABOVE IT, IT'S WEIRD!

YOU'RE RIGHT, KALIK THIS
WASN'T BUILT BY HUMAN HANDS









GONE! BLOOD—AND HIS LASER.
THEY'VE GOT MOLOY, WHATEVER THEY ARE.



ALL NIGHT THEY FOUGHT AN UNSEEN ENEMY -

THAT WAS THE LONGEST NIGHT OF MY LIFE MY
LASER IS ALMOST DISCHARGED MUCH LONGER
AND

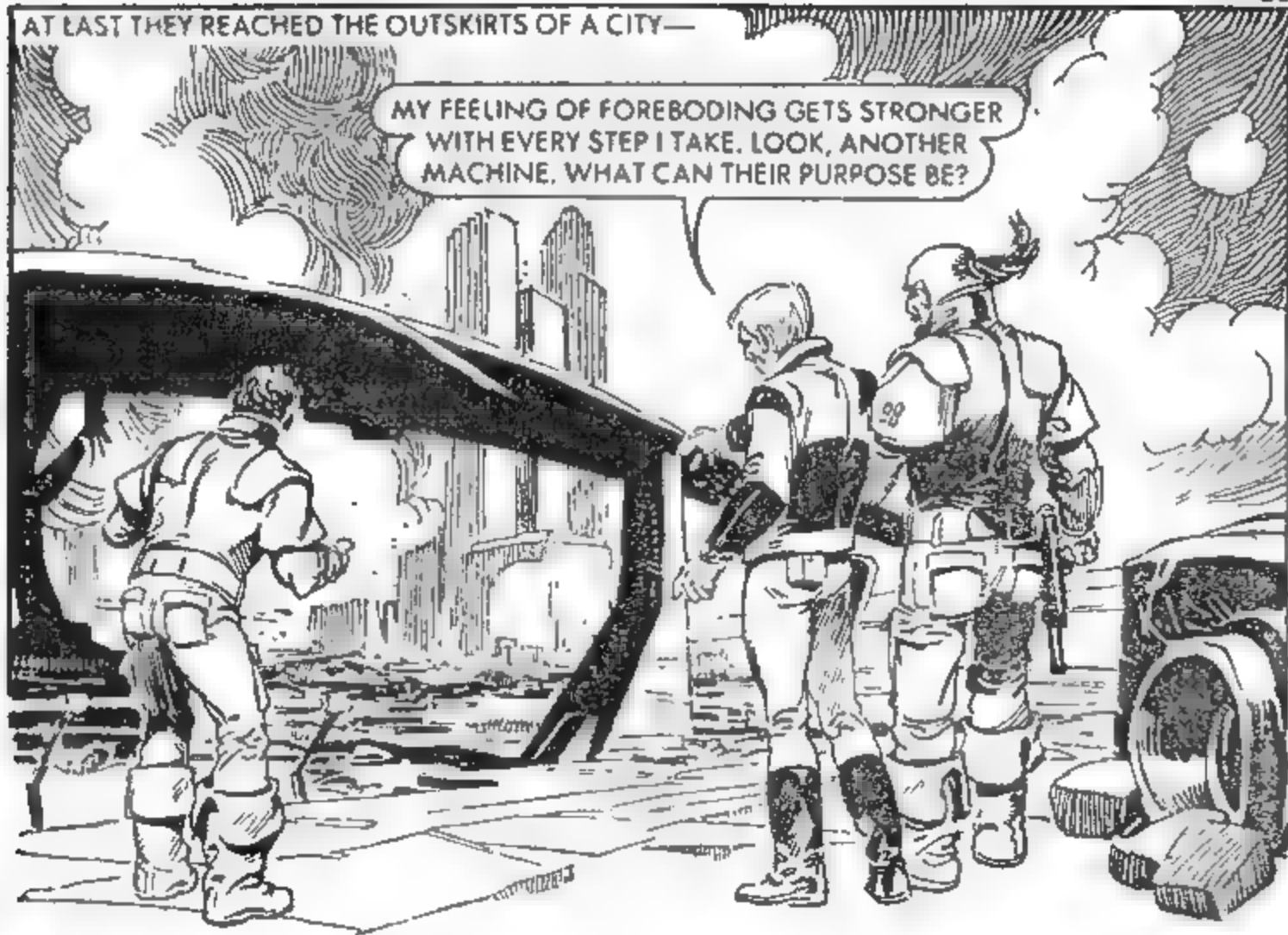
SOLTRON HAS FOUND
SOMETHING QUICK





AT LAST THEY REACHED THE OUTSKIRTS OF A CITY—

MY FEELING OF FOREBODING GETS STRONGER
WITH EVERY STEP I TAKE. LOOK, ANOTHER
MACHINE. WHAT CAN THEIR PURPOSE BE?



WHAT DID THIS?

MAYBE THERE WAS A WAR OR A
PLAGUE THAT WIPED THEM ALL OUT





THEY'RE NOT ALL DEAD, KALIK
SOMEONE SHOT DOWN THE SHUTTLE.

NO NOOO!



WE'RE NOT ALONE
IN THIS CITY, TOR.

DEAD!!

THEY CONTINUED THEIR SEARCH.

IT COULD BE MY IMAGINATION,
BUT I THINK WE ARE BEING WATCHED

I SENSE IT TOO! THERE IS EVIL IN
THE WIND—EYES IN THE
SHADOWS...

SUDDENLY, A BRIGHT LIGHT
FLASHED ACROSS THEM.

WHAT THE ... ! IT'S NOT A
LASER. SOMETHING IS
REFLECTING THE LIGHT OF THE
SETTING SUN. THE FLASHES
AREN'T RANDOM EITHER





BUT THE ODDS WERE TOO GREAT —



MY GUN! I... UHH!

TOO... MANY...



WHAT IN THE COSMOS IS THAT?

WHUMP.

THEY'RE FALLING BACK!



SECONDS LATER THEY WERE INSIDE A DERELICT BUILDING



THEY CLIMBED ENDLESS FLIGHTS, UNTIL.

WE CAN'T GO ANY FURTHER, KAIK

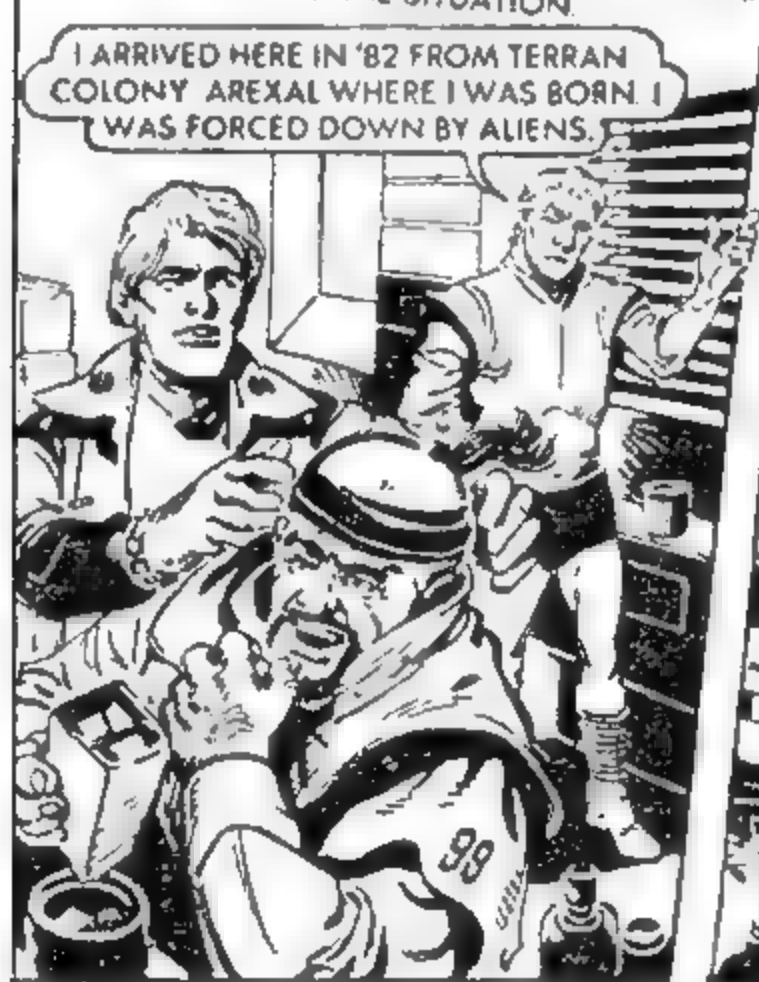
THAT'S THE IDEA, MY FRIENDS BUT MOST IMPORTANT, NEITHER CAN THE MUTIES.


THE MAN LET DOWN A ROPE LADDER.

CLIMB UP THIS, DESTROYING THE STAIRCASE IMMEDIATELY BELOW HAS PROVIDED A BARRIER THE MUTIES CAN'T SCALE




STOBOR EXPLAINED THE SITUATION.





CYBORGS FROM ORIONUS. I HAVE SEEN
A FEW. THEY ARRIVED DURING A
COMMUNICATIONS BLACKOUT. RADIO
— TRI-VID — SUBSPACE FREQUENCIES.
EVERYTHING JAMMED. THE DEFENCE
SYSTEMS WERE PARALYSED

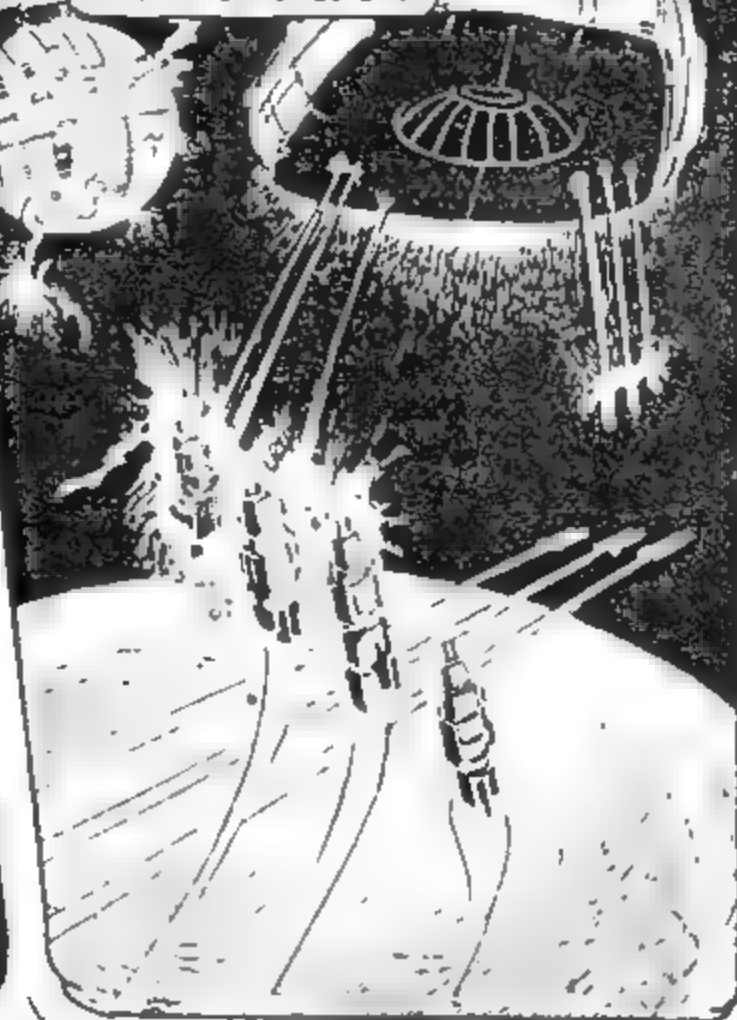


WE FOUGHT THEM, BUT IT WAS
HOPELESS. JUST MY LUCK TO WARP
IN AS A TERRAFORMING INVASION
WAS UNDER WAY

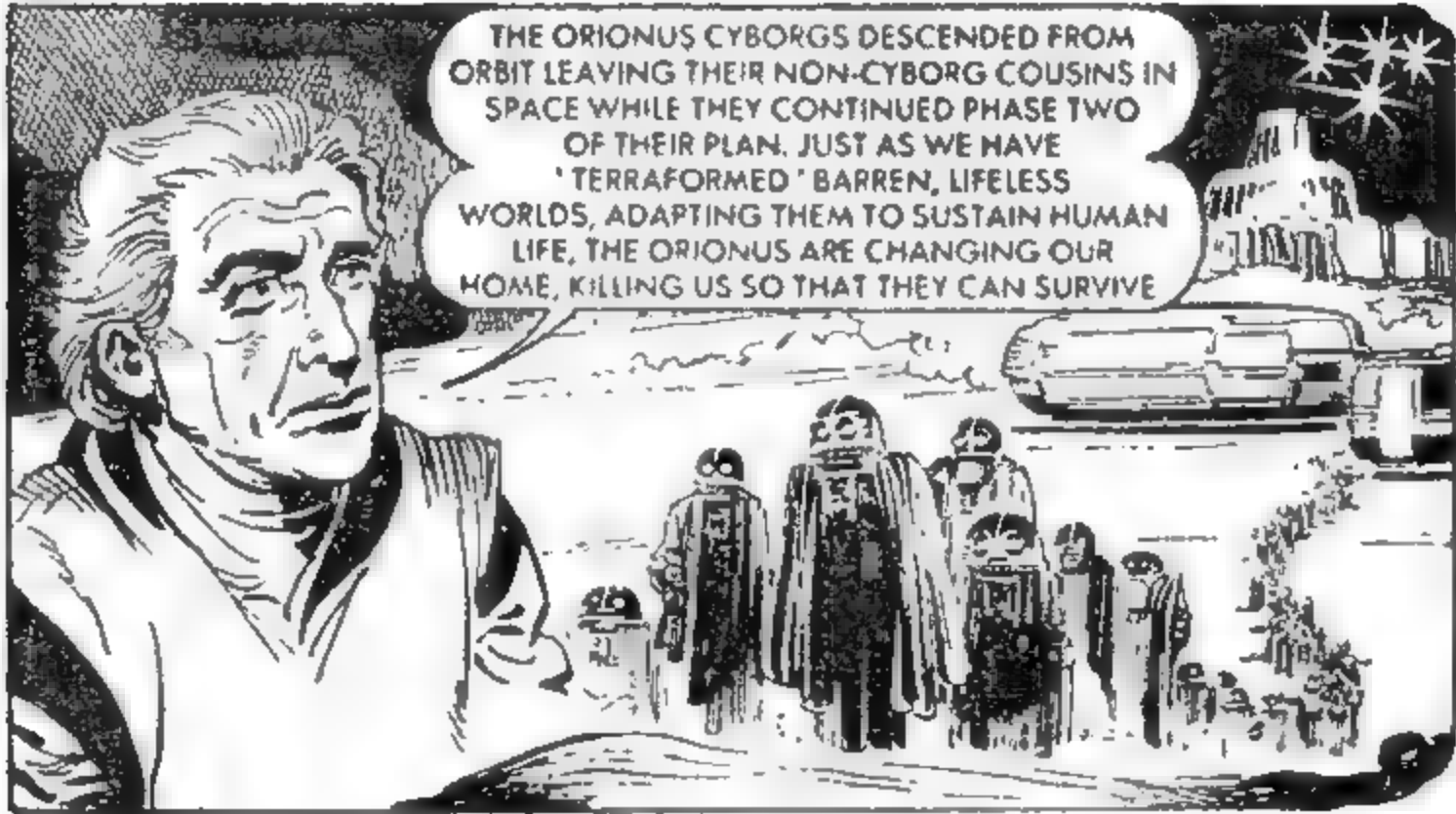
THEY CRUSHED ALL
RESISTANCE WITHOUT MERCY.



WHAT SPACEFIGHTERS COULD BE
LAUNCHED WERE BLASTED OUT OF
THE SKY. THE ORIONUS TERRAFORM
SHIP ORBITED BATHING THE
ATMOSPHERE WITH VAST AMOUNTS
OF DEADLY RADIATION. THE
SURVIVORS TOOK SHELTER IN THE
RADIATION SHELTERS.



WE REMAINED THERE FOR
TWO YEARS BEFORE IT WAS
SAFE ENOUGH TO RETURN
TO THE SURFACE. THOSE
HUMANS WHO COULDN'T
FIND SHELTER WERE
MUTATED BY THE
RADIATION.




THE ORIONUS CYBORGS DESCENDED FROM ORBIT LEAVING THEIR NON-CYBORG COUSINS IN SPACE WHILE THEY CONTINUED PHASE TWO OF THEIR PLAN. JUST AS WE HAVE 'TERRAFORMED' BARREN, LIFELESS WORLDS, ADAPTING THEM TO SUSTAIN HUMAN LIFE, THE ORIONUS ARE CHANGING OUR HOME, KILLING US SO THAT THEY CAN SURVIVE



THE MACHINES IN THE DESERT. WHAT ARE THEY?

THERE ARE HUNDREDS, MAYBE THOUSANDS OF THEM — TERRAFORM CONTROL POINTS — SOON OUR ATMOSPHERE WILL BE PURE AMMONIA — AND WE SHALL HAVE PERISHED LONG BEFORE THAT



THEN WHY STRUGGLE HERE WHEN
A SLOW DEATH BY POISONING
AWAITS YOU?


ALL MY HOPES LIE IN WHAT
AWAITS AT THE OTHER END OF
THIS ROPE.



THEY FOLLOWED STOBOR
DOWN THE ROPE.

THE MUTANTS CANNOT
PENETRATE THIS BASEMENT.
THE VEHICLE NEEDS REPAIR.
I CANNOT DO IT.

IF IT ISN'T MAJOR, I CAN FIX
IT. BUT WHAT'S THE POINT ...
NO PLACE ON EARTH WILL
ESCAPE THE AMMONIA!



NOT EARTH, MY FRIEND. ESCAPE
INTO SPACE! I SAW NO SPACECRAFT
ESCAPE... SO SOMEWHERE THERE
MUST BE SOME I HAVE WORKED
OUT A FEW POSSIBLE LOCATIONS

YOU MEAN, YOU'RE DARING TO
HOPE THERE COULD BE SHIPS
HIDDEN?

WHAT ELSE IS THERE TO HOPE FOR? I EST MATE
THAT BY THE END OF THE YEAR THE MACHINES WILL
HAVE STOPPED — THEIR WORK IS FINISHED. I AM
NOT THE KIND TO SIT AND WAIT FOR DEATH

NOR AM I, STOBOR SHOW
ME WHAT MUST BE DONE.

THE MEN BUSIED THEMSELVES ON THE VEHICLE —

AS WE ARE TO FIGHT TOGETHER, WE MUST
HAVE TRUST IN EACH OTHER. I AM NO CRIMINAL
JUST PART OF AN OPPOSITION MOVEMENT TO
THE GOVERNMENT ON OLTER 4... WHO DON'T
LIKE OPPOSITION

AND I AM A FERRY PILOT. TOGETHER WE
SHALL BE THE RESISTANCE HERE

FINALLY THE MUTANTS GREW BOLD



MEETING NO RESISTANCE, THE MUTANTS SWARMED INTO THE
PENTHOUSE DESTROYING EVERYTHING.



THE NOISE REACHED EARS BELOW.

GREAT GALAXIES. THEY'VE
PENETRATED YOUR
FORTRESS, STOBOR. WE'VE
JUST RUN OUT OF TIME.

THEN WE MOVE NOW.
READY OR NOT.

THE ENGINE FIRED FIRST TIME —

THE MUTIES
ARE BREAKING IN!



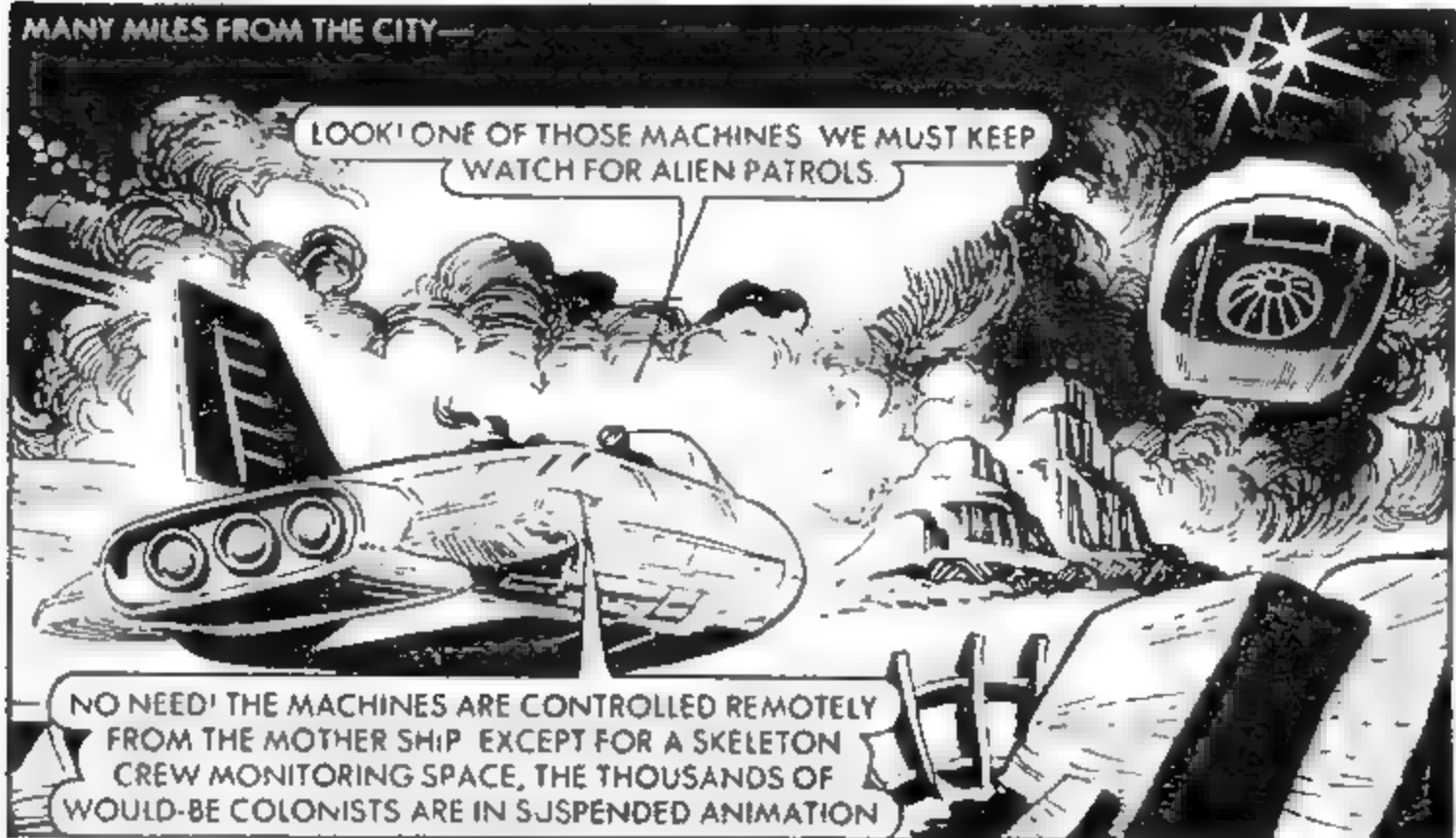
THEY SMASHED THEIR WAY THROUGH THE MUTANTS.



THERE'S NO TURNING BACK NOW.

THEN OUR SURVIVAL
RUN BEGINS, STOBOR.

MANY MILES FROM THE CITY—



LOOK! ONE OF THOSE MACHINES WE MUST KEEP
WATCH FOR ALIEN PATROLS.

NO NEED! THE MACHINES ARE CONTROLLED REMOTELY
FROM THE MOTHER SHIP EXCEPT FOR A SKELETON
CREW MONITORING SPACE, THE THOUSANDS OF
WOULD-BE COLONISTS ARE IN SUSPENDED ANIMATION

SO THEY SLEEP, BIDDING THEIR TIME,
WHILST EARTH IS CHANGED TO
SUIT THEM.



LATE THE NEXT DAY—

CAN YOU TASTE THE BITTERNESS IN
THE AIR HERE, KALIK? THE AMMONIA
IS BEGINNING TO MAKE ITSELF FELT.



THE VEHICLE WAS LASHED BY A VIOLENT STORM

EVEN THE RAIN TASTES FOUL WHAT THE...? YOU'RE STOPPING, STOBOR!

I'VE GOT NO CHOICE. OTHERWISE WE RISK LOSING THE ROAD IN THIS DOWNPOUR

DANGER LURKED IN THE DARKNESS







TOR BLASTED THE MUD TO LIQUID WITH HIS PHASER.

THAT'S A TEMPORARY GAP...
WE'LL GET FREE NOW.

JUST AS WELL, SPACER. THIS PLACE
ISN'T TOO HEALTHY.



THE VEHICLE LURCHED FREE.

BY THE PLANETS,
WE DID IT!



BUT AT FIRST LIGHT DISASTER STRUCK.



SHE'S DONE FOR

SO WE ARE OUT IN THE OPEN ON
FOOT WHEN NIGHT FALLS...

IT MAY NOT COME TO THAT, MY
FRIENDS. UNLESS MY MEMORY
MISLEADS ME, WE ARE NEAR OUR
DESTINATION.

THEY TRUDGED AFTER STOBOR ACROSS
THE WILD TERRAIN.



WE'VE ARRIVED

B... BUT I DON'T
UNDERSTAND WHERE?

FROM MAPS I WORKED OUT
POSSIBLE SPACECRAFT SITES IN
THE AREA THIS IS AN
UNDERGROUND HANGAR



STOBOR LED THEM INSIDE THE ROCK FISSURE.



AT THE LAST POSSIBLE MOMENT STOBOR KEYED IN A SEQUENCE . . .

YOU DID IT, STOBOR.
BUT, HOW?

ALL COMPUTERS WERE PROGRAMMED BY
PEOPLE . . . MOST OF WHOM I KNEW THROUGH
MY JOB AS A COMPUTER TECHNICIAN I
RECOGNISED THE PROGRAMMER'S STYLE

STOBOR LED THEM TO A HANGAR —

SOMEONE ELSE HAD THE SAME IDEA

THEY ALMOST MADE IT TOO, BUT THE
RADIATION GOT TO THEM FIRST POOR
DEVILS.



THE SYSTEMS WERE STILL INTACT AND THE CRAFT WAS ACTIVATED



MY DREAM OF SURVIVAL HAS BECOME A REALITY,
TOR.

ARM THE CANNON... LET'S
FIND THE ORIONUS TERRAFORM
SHIP



BUT AS THE CRAFT CLIMBED TOWARDS ORB.T—

TRACE CONFIRMED AS EARTHLING
CRAFT, COMMANDER.

OUR ROBOT INTERCEPTORS WILL
BLAST IT OUT OF THE SKY.



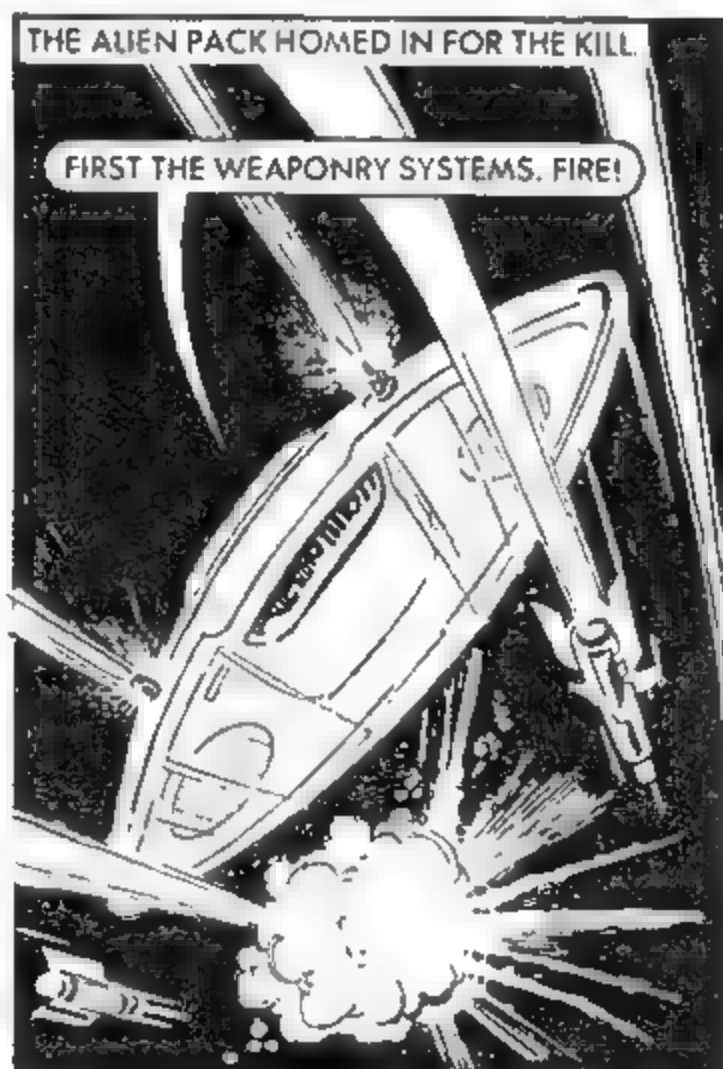
ALIEN FIGHTERS!

WE'RE NOT LOST YET, KA'IK



THE ALIEN PACK HOMED IN FOR THE KILL.

FIRST THE WEAPONRY SYSTEMS. FIRE!





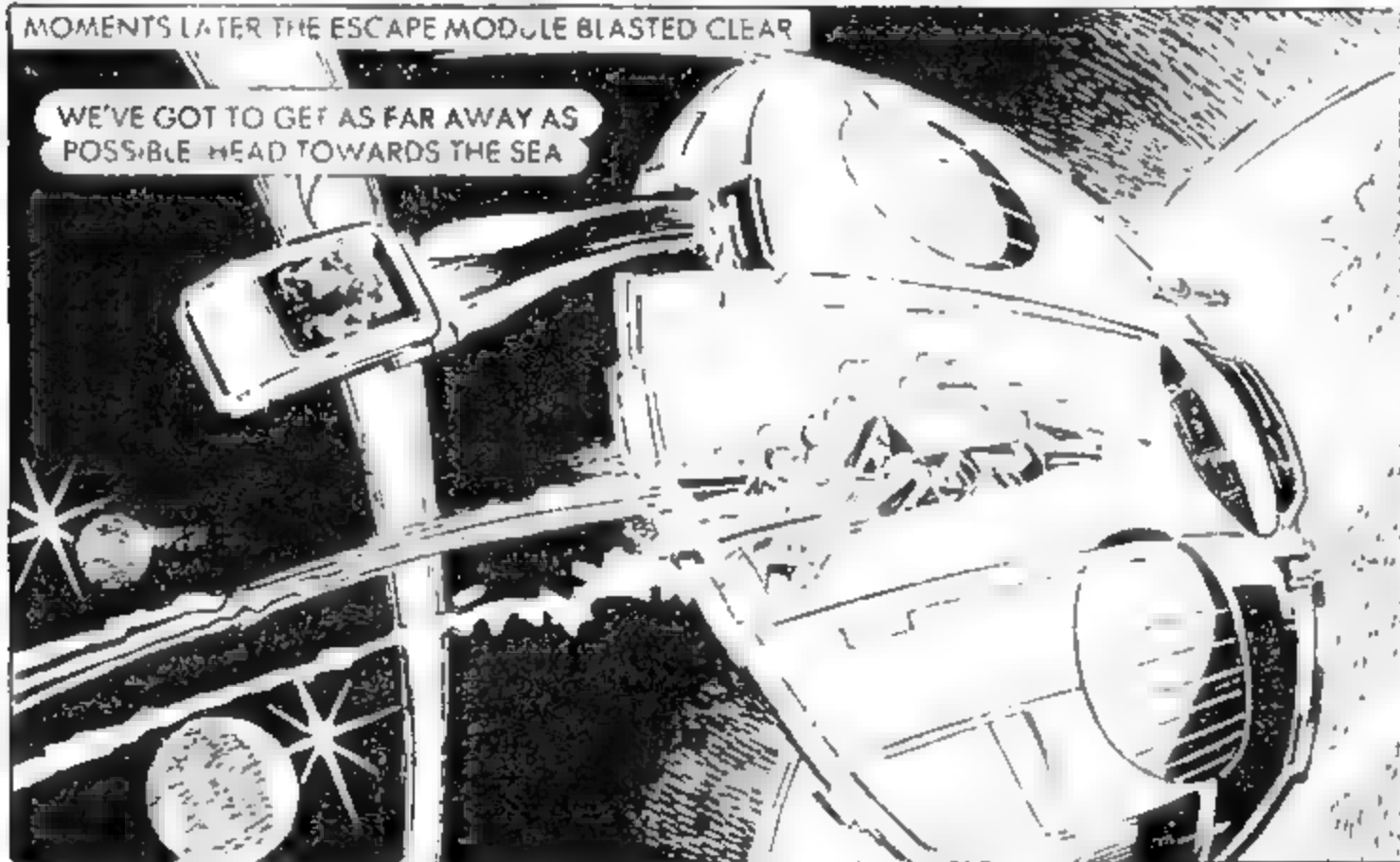
KALK AND STOBOR MADE FOR THE ESCAPE MODULE

THIS SHIP WILL EXPLODE WITH
INCREDIBLE FORCE I CAN TAKE
THEM AS WELL!



MOMENTS LATER THE ESCAPE MODULE BLASTED CLEAR

WE'VE GOT TO GET AS FAR AWAY AS
POSSIBLE HEAD TOWARDS THE SEA



ALIEN EYES WATCHED THE STRICKEN EARTHSHIP.


FOLLOW THAT CRAFT DOWN—
ENSURE ITS DESTRUCTION



MOMENTS LATER—

SHE'S HIT THE SURFACE!
WHAT AN EXPLOSION! BUT
IT MISSED THE ALIEN SHIP BY MILES.
WHAT WENT WRONG TOR?




A black and white comic panel showing three men from the chest up. On the left, a man with a beard and a headband looks shocked with his mouth open. In the center, a man with short, light-colored hair looks forward with a serious expression. On the right, an older man with thinning hair looks slightly to the side with a concerned expression. They appear to be inside a vehicle or a control room, with a window or screen visible behind them.

NOTHING WENT WRONG, STOBOR. THE CRAFT HAD NO APPARENT WEAKNESS, BUT THE GROUND BELOW IT HAS! LOOK!

GREAT SCOTT! OF COURSE, THE SAN ANDREAS FAULT, THE LINE OF GEOLOGICAL WEAKNESS RUNNING THROUGH THE CONTINENT.

THE LAND BUCKLED AND SPLIT TO ENGULF THE ALIEN MACHINE IN WHITE HOT LAVA.

A black and white comic panel depicting a dramatic scene. A large, dark, mechanical alien machine is shown being engulfed by a massive, bright white and yellow flow of lava. The lava is depicted with intense, swirling lines, suggesting heat and movement. In the lower left corner, there are several starburst symbols indicating sparks or debris. The overall scene conveys a sense of overwhelming natural power destroying advanced technology.

NOT EVEN THEIR TECHNOLOGY CAN RESIST THE VIOLENT FORCES OF NATURE. AND WITH THE MOTHER SHIP DESTROYED THE MACHINES IT CONTROLS WILL CEASE TO OPERATE.

THE LIFECRAFT DITCHED WITH LAND IN SIGHT.

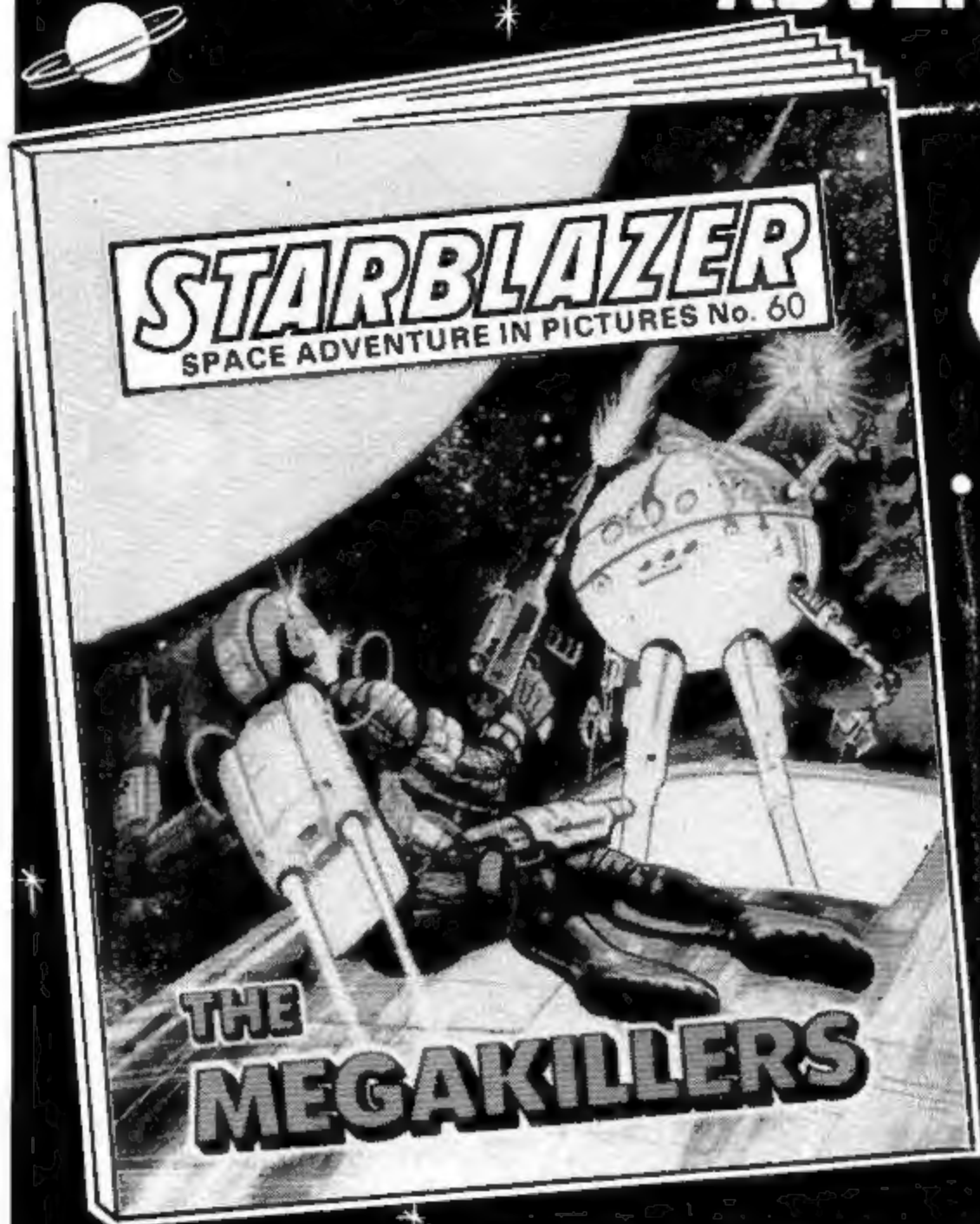
WE'RE SAFE! THERE MUST BE OTHER PEOPLE
IN REMOTE AREAS THAT ESCAPED THE
RADIATION.

THERE IS PLENTY FOOD HERE... WE CAN
LAST FOR A LONG TIME.

LONG ENOUGH TO MAKE
CONTACT WITH OUR OWN
WORLDS AND RE-ESTABLISH
EARTH AS A MAJOR FORCE
AGAIN.



**DON'T MISS THIS MONTH'S
OTHER ACTION-PACKED
ADVENTURE**



NOW ON SALE

STARBLAZERS EARTH SATELLITES 10

The European Space Agency's first weather satellite, Meteosat, launched in November 1977, is in a synchronous orbit over the Atlantic. It took this weather forecasting picture of Earth in 1979.

